



ON
THE ROAD
HOME



MARGARET E. SANGSTER

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

1893



WREATHED WITH HOLLY

[Page 125]

ON THE ROAD HOME

Poems

BY ✓

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

"East or West home is best"

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK
HARPER AND BROTHERS
MDCCXCIII



239448

12-38362
1893

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TO
MY FRIEND
HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD

The poems in this volume originally appeared in HARPER'S BAZAR and WEEKLY, *The Congregationalist*, *The Christian Intelligencer*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Home-Maker*, and *Sunday-School Times*.

CONTENTS

I—FOR SIX DAYS OUT OF SEVEN		<i>Page</i>
THE SIN OF OMISSION		I
HIS FIRST LOVE		3
INTANGIBLE		5
THE PASSING YEAR		8
THE DEAR LITTLE WIFE AT HOME . . .		12
IF MOTHER WOULD LISTEN		14
PATIENT WITH THE LIVING		16
IN THE NIGHT SEASON		18
THE GAIN OF LOSS		21
THE WIND ACROSS THE WHEAT		23
THE HELP THAT COMES TOO LATE . . .		26
WAITING FOR THE ANGELS		28
WHITTIER		30
TENNYSON		32
A BALLAD OF MAY		33
THEN AND NOW		37
THE EVENING LESSON		41

	<i>Page</i>
BELLS IN THE DESERT	44
A LESSON	47
CHRYSANTHEMUMS	49
IN THE BELFRY	51
IN HAMPTON ROADS	53
FLOWERS FOR MEMORIAL DAY	54
CROSSING THE DOWN-TOWN FERRIES . .	57

II—LOOKING UPWARD

TWO OR THREE	61
TE DEUM LAUDAMUS	63
HOW LONG?	65
GOD'S APPOINTMENTS	67
A KING'S MESSENGER	69
THE CITY OF GOD	74
A SONG OF SUMMER	76
A DAY OF THE LORD	78
THE INVISIBLE GUEST	80
THEY NEITHER TOIL NOR SPIN	83
THE CORE OF THE HOUSE	85
THE CHILD AT THE GATE	89
OUR BROKEN DAYS	91
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	94
MY ALABASTER BOX	97
ONLY IN THEE	100
GOING HOME	102

III—THANKSGIVING

	<i>Page</i>
IN THE OLD HOME	107
THANKSGIVING ALWAYS	110
MOTHER'S THANKSGIVING	113
COMMON MERCIES	116

IV—CHRISTMAS SONGS

HER GIFTS.	121
EMBERS	123
WREATHED WITH HOLLY	125
THE ANNUNCIATION.	127
THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM	129
WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES.	132
CHRISTMAS EVE	134
GOD BLESS US ALL	137

V—EASTER

AN EASTER SONG	141
MARY	143

I

FOR SIX DAYS OUT OF SEVEN

THE SIN OF OMISSION

IT isn't the thing you do, Dear,
It's the thing you leave undone
That gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten ;
The letter you did not write ;
The flower you did not send, Dear,
Are your haunting ghosts at night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way ;
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say ;
The loving touch of the hand, Dear,
The gentle, winning tone
Which you had no time nor thought for
With troubles enough of your own.

Those little acts of kindness
So easily out of mind,
Those chances to be angels
Which we poor mortals find,

They come in night and silence,
Each sad, reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging
And a chill has fallen on faith.

For life is all too short, Dear,
And sorrow is all too great
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late ;
And it isn't the thing you do, Dear,
It's the thing you leave undone
Which gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun.

HIS FIRST LOVE

His first love? Yes, I knew her very well—

Yes, she was young and beautiful, like you;
With cheeks rose-flushed, and lovely eyes that
fell

If people praised her overmuch, but true
And fearless, flashing out as blue eyes can
At any cruelty to beast or man.

Her voice? 'Twas very gentle, sweet and low,

With tones to hush a tired child to sleep;
In every cadence clear, its silvery flow

Beside a sick-bed had a charm so deep
Its spell could banish creeping waves of pain,
Bring easeful quiet to the fevered brain.

Her hands? Well, dear, they were not quite
so small

As those that trifle with your dainty laces;
A little browned, perhaps, they had such call

To carry sunshine into shady places;
Less delicate than yours, and yet I doubt
If one who loved her ever found it out.

Her feet? Sure never steps so swift and steady
Went straight as arrow flying to a goal;
If duty summoned her, the ever ready
To minister to any ailing soul.
Dear feet that followed where the Master led,
And set their prints where first He'd left His
tread!

His first love? Oh, you do begin to see
That he might love her dearly, and that yet
His manhood's love to you might guerdon be,
Upon your woman's brow, its coronet.
Dear girl, accept the gift. There is no other
First love so holy as *she* gained—his mother.

INTANGIBLE

PATIENTLY over the road we fare,
Intent on the end we'd win ;
There's a hint of frost in the misty air,
And the night is closing in ;
But vague and far from the muffled past
Comes a tender, haunting tone,
And we grasp the skirts of a memory fast,
From the land of our morning blown.

'Tis the faint, sweet sound of a tinkling bell
Over the pastures borne ;
'Tis the lamb's low bleat on the lonesome fell ;
'Tis a rustle amid the corn ;
The scud and rush of the squirrel's tread
Parting the withered leaves,
Or the twitter of swallows overhead
In the dusk of the cottage eaves.

And once again we are boys and girls
In a round of school and play,

With a mother's hand on our tangled curls,
When we kneel at her lap to pray.
Nothing we reck of the ring of gold,
Nor the fall of the dice on 'Change,
For the beautiful story is all untold,
And the world yet new and strange.

And lo! instead of the masks we wear
In the throngs we meet to-day,
Instead of the shoulders bowed to bear,
And the eyes no longer gay,
Our cheeks are quick with the sudden flush,
We are eager for work and strife,
And never a sorrow has come to hush
Our jubilant pulse of life.

We sometimes catch in the crowded street
A dear pet name we knew,
Ere the dance had gone from the childish feet,
Or we'd gathered a sprig of rue;
'Tis somebody else who claims it now,
But the spell of the old-time tone
Brings unawares unto lip and brow
The light of another zone.

Faring apace to the end—'tis true,
Yet ever behind us lies
The shimmering pearl and the fathomless blue
Of the lucent morning skies.

And the wealth we prize as first and best
Is a wealth no scales can weigh,
For 'tis not in the East, and not in the West,
And not on the earth to-day.

THE PASSING YEAR

By the glimmer of green and golden,
 The leap and the sparkle of spray,
By the heart of the rose unfolden
 To the breath of the summer day.
By the shout and song of the reapers
 Binding the ripened sheaf,
By the bloom on the fragrant cluster,
 By the fall of the loosened leaf,
By the feathery whirl of the winter,
 And the deep waves' hollow sound,
By the moan of the wind in the forest
 When the night was gathering round.
By the sweet of the honey of lilies,
 By the fields all brown and sere,
Through the march of the changing seasons,
 We measured the passing year.

By the baby's step on the carpet,
 By her earliest broken word ;
And her laugh as she ran to meet us—
 Merrier never was heard,

By the time when she said, "Our Father,"
With two little hands held up,
And the flower-face softly bending
Like a blossom's brimming cup,
By the day she was parched with fever,
And spent with the stress of pain,
By the hour we gave thanksgiving
That baby was well again,
By the hide and seek of her dimples,
And the start of her April tear,
By the grace of our darling's growing
We measured the passing year.

By the love that is tried and precious,
And needful as daily bread,
By the fond hands clasped in ours,
As the chequered path we tread,
By the glow of the household faces,
And the hush of the household peace,
By the beautiful wifely presence,
That gives to care surcease,
By the looks that are ever tender,
The kiss that is always true,
By the small familiar sayings,
And the work we daily do,
By board and loaf and flagon,
And the coming of kindred dear,
The home's unwritten story,
We've measured the passing year.

By the brave things thought or spoken,
 By the true deeds simply done,
By the mean things crushed and conquered
 And the bloodless battles won,
By the days when the load was heavy,
 Yet the heart grew strong to bear,
By the days when the heart was craven,
 Lacking the strength of prayer.
By the hour that crept slow-footed,
 And the hour that flew on wings,
The time when the harp was silent,
 The time when we swept the strings.
By the dearth, the dole, and the labor,
 The fulness, reward, and cheer,
By the book of the angel's record
 We measured the passing year.

By the joy of the Christmas carols,
 And the solemn shade of the cross,
By the breaking dawn of Easter,
 And the gain that follows loss.
By the name of the world's Redeemer,
 And the sins we trample down,
By the light that shines above us,
 Though the darkling cloud may frown,
By the silent voices calling,
 By the dear remembered eyes,
By the heaven which ever beckons,
 Beyond these earthly skies,

By credos grand and steadfast,
Banishing doubt and fear,
By the Christian's hope and comfort,
We've measured the passing year.

THE DEAR LITTLE WIFE AT HOME

THE dear little wife at home, John,
With ever so much to do,
Stitches to set, and babies to pet,
And so many thoughts of you—
The beautiful household fairy,
Filling your heart with light ;
Whatever you meet to-day, John,
Go cheerily home to-night.

For though you are worn and weary,
You needn't be cross or curt ;
There are words like darts to gentle hearts,
There are looks that wound and hurt.
With the key in the latch at home, John,
Drop troubles out of sight ;
To the dear little wife who is waiting,
Go cheerily home to-night.

You know she will come to meet you,
A smile on her sunny face ;
And your wee little girl, as pure as a pearl,
Will be there in her childish grace ;

And the boy, his father's pride, John,
With eyes so brave and bright ;
From the strife and the din to the peace, John,
Go cheerily home to-night.

What though the tempter try you,
Though the shafts of adverse fate
May bustle near, and the sky be drear,
And the laggard fortune wait ?
You are passing rich already,
Let the haunting fears take flight ;
With the fate that wins success, John,
Go cheerily home to-night.

IF MOTHER WOULD LISTEN

IF mother would listen to me, dears,
She would freshen that faded gown ;
She would sometimes take an hour's rest,
And sometimes a trip to town.
And it shouldn't be all for the children,
The fun and the cheer and the play ;
With the patient droop on the tired mouth,
And the "mother has had her day."

True, mother has had her day, dears,
When you were her babies three,
And she stepped about the farm and the house,
As busy as ever a bee.
When she rocked you all to sleep, dears,
And sent you all to school,
And wore herself out, and did without,
And lived by the Golden Rule.

And so your turn has come, dears,
Her hair is growing white,
And her eyes are gaining that far-away look
That peers beyond the night.

One of these days in the morning,
Mother will not be here ;
She will fade away into silence,
The mother so true and dear.

Then what will you do in the daylight,
And what in the gloaming dim ?
And father tired and lonesome then,
Pray what will you do for him ?
If you want to keep your mother,
You must make her rest to-day ;
Must give her a share in the frolic,
And draw her into the play.

And it mother would listen to me, dears,
She'd buy her a gown of silk,
With buttons of royal velvet,
And ruffles as white as milk.
And she'd let you do the trotting,
While she sat still in the chair ;
That mother should have it hard all through,
It strikes me isn't fair.

PATIENT WITH THE LIVING

SWEET friend, when thou and I are gone
 Beyond earth's weary labor,
When small shall be our need of grace
 From comrade or from neighbor,
Past all the strife, the toil, the care,
 And done with all the sighing,
What tender ruth shall we have gained,
 Alas, by simply dying!

Then lips too chary for their praise
 Will tell our merits over,
And eyes too swift our faults to see
 Shall no defect discover.
Then hands that would not lift a stone
 Where stones were thick to cumber
Our steep hill path, will scatter flowers
 Above our pillow'd slumber.

Sweet friend, perchance both thou and I,
 Ere love is past forgiving,
Should take the earnest lesson home—
 Be patient with the living.

To-day's repressed rebuke may save
Our blinding tears to-morrow ;
Then patience, e'en when keenest edge
May whet a nameless sorrow.

'Tis easy to be gentle when
Death's silence shames our clamor,
And easy to discern the best
Through memory's mystic glamour ;
But wise it were for thee and me,
Ere love is past forgiving,
To take the tender lesson home—
Be patient with the living.

B

IN THE NIGHT SEASON

You are face to face with trouble,
And the skies are murk and gray ;
You hardly know which way to turn,
You are almost dazed, you say.
And at night you wake to wonder
What the next day's news will bring ;
Your pillow is brushed by phantom care
With a grim and ghastly wing.

You are face to face with trouble ;
A child has gone astray ;
A ship is wrecked on the bitter sea ;
There's a note you cannot pay.
Your brave right hand is feeble ;
Your sight is growing blind ;
Perhaps a friend is cold and stern,
Who was ever warm and kind.

You are face to face with trouble !
No wonder you cannot sleep ;
But stay ; and think of the promise,
The Lord will safely keep

And lead you out of the thicket,
And into the pasture land ;
You have only to walk straight onward,
Holding the dear Lord's hand.

Face to face with trouble ;
And did you forget to look,
As the good old father taught you,
For help to the dear old Book ?
You have heard the tempter whisper ;
And you've had no heart to pray ;
And God was dropped from your scheme of
life,
Oh ! for many a weary day !

Then face to face with trouble ;
It is thus He calls you back
From the land of dearth and famine
To the land that has no lack.
You would not hear in the sunshine,
You hear in the midnight gloom ;
Behold, His tapers kindle
Like stars in the quiet room.

Oh ! face to face with trouble,
Friend, I have often stood ;
To learn that pain hath sweetness,
To know that God is good.

Arise and meet the daylight ;
Be strong, and do your best !
With an honest heart, and a childlike faith
That God will do the rest.

THE GAIN OF LOSS

WE hollowed the bed for our darling's rest,
And lined it with roses white and red,
And the sod above it we softly pressed.

“Sleep well,” through our gathering tears,
we said.
But, oh! the desolate hours we spent
In the silent home from which baby went.

We missed the patter of little feet,
And the broken music of baby talk ;
We were lost for the cares that had been so
sweet,
When the fearless laddie began to walk,
And scarce could feel that another Hand
Was guiding him now in the better land.

The lonely days, and the lonely nights ;
Had they ever a gain our fond hearts knew ?
Ah, yes ! for oft, from the heavenly heights,
Came echoes floating our darkness through ;
And the land beyond grew near and bright,
Where our beautiful baby lived in light.

And our lives were touched by a holier grace,
And each to each was bound the more,
For the dream in our souls of a little face,
Waiting for us on the farther shore ;
And day by day we heard the chime
Of bells beyond this passing time.

There came to us, too, from the baby's grave,
A tender thought for those who wept,
And our hands were swifter to bless and save,
Our hearts in yearning love were kept ;
We were fain to cure each bitter ache,
Or ease its smart, for baby's sake.

And so we have learned to count the gain,
Where once we counted alone the loss ;
And so, through the bittersweet of pain,
Have found the blessing within the cross.
“Thank God,” we cry, with reverent breath,
“For the life that is quickened but through
death !”

THE WIND ACROSS THE WHEAT

You ask me for the sweetest sound mine
ears have ever heard?
A sweeter than the ripples' splash, or trilling
of a bird,
Than tapping of the rain-drops upon the roof
at night,
Than the sighing of the pine-trees on yon-
der mountain height?
And I tell you, these are tender, yet never
quite so sweet
As the murmur and the cadence of the wind
across the wheat.

Have you watched the golden billows in a
sunlit sea of grain,
Ere yet the reaper bound the sheaves, to fill
the creaking wain?
Have you thought how snow and tempest,
and the bitter wintry cold,
Were but the guardian angels, the next year's
bread to hold?

A precious thing, unharmed by the turmoil
of the sky,
Just waiting, growing, silently, until the storms
went by !

Oh ! have you lifted up your heart, to Him
who loves us all,
And listens, through the angel-songs, if but
a sparrow fall ?
And then, thus thinking of His hand, what
symphony so sweet
As the music in the long refrain, the wind
across the wheat ?

It hath its dulcet echoes, from many a lullaby,
Where the cradled babe is hushed beneath
the mother's loving eye.
It hath its heaven-promise, as sure as heaven's
throne,
That He who sent the manna, will ever feed
His own ;
And, though an atom only, 'mid countless
hosts who share
The Maker's never-ceasing watch, the Father's
deathless care,
That atom is as dear to Him, as my dear
child to me ;
He cannot lose me from my place, through
all eternity :

You wonder, when it sings me *this*, there's
nothing half so sweet,
Beneath the circling planets, as the wind
across the wheat?

THE HELP THAT COMES TOO LATE

'Tis a wearisome world, this world of ours,
With its tangles small and great,
Its weeds that smother the springing flow-
ers,
And its hapless strifes with fate ;
But the darkest day of its desolate days
Sees the help that comes too late.

Ah ! woe for the word that is never said
Till the ear is deaf to hear,
And woe for the lack to the fainting head
Of the ringing shout of cheer ;
Ah ! woe for the laggard feet that tread
In the mournful wake of the bier.

What booteth help when the heart is numb ?
What booteth a broken spar
Of love thrown out when the lips are dumb,
And life's barque drifted far,
Oh ! far and fast from the alien past,
Over the moaning bar ?

A pitiful thing the gift to-day
That is dross and nothing worth,
Though if it had come but yesterday,
It had brimmed with sweet the earth ;
A fading rose in a death-cold hand,
That perished in want and dearth.

• Who fain would help in this world of ours,
Where sorrowful steps must fall,
Bring help in time to the waning powers
Ere the bier is spread with the pall ;
Nor send reserves when the flags are furled,
And the dead beyond your call.

For baffling most in this dreary world,
With its tangles small and great,
Its lonesome nights and its weary days,
And its struggles forlorn with fate,
Is that bitterest grief, too deep for tears,
Of the help that comes too late.

WAITING FOR THE ANGELS

WAITING through days of fever,
Waiting through nights of pain,
 For the waft of wings at the portal,
 For the sound of songs immortal,
And the breaking of life's long chain.

There is little to do for our dear one—
Only to watch and pray—
 As the tide is outward drifting,
 As the gates of heaven are lifting,
And its gleam is on her way.

The tasks that so often taxed her,
The children she held so dear,
 The strain of the coming and going,
 The stress of the mending and sewing,
The burden of many a year.

Trouble her now no longer,
She is past the fret and care.
 On her brow is the angel's token,
 The look of a peace unbroken.
She was never before so fair.

You see she is waiting the angels,
And we—we are standing apart.
For us there are loss and sorrow ;
For her is the endless morrow,
And the reaping-time of the heart.

WHITTIER

SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

His fourscore years and five
Are gone, like a tale that is told.
The quick tears start, there's an ache at the
heart,
For we never thought him old.

Straight as a mountain pine,
With the mountain eagle's eye,
With the hand-clasp strong, and the unhushed
song,
Was it time for him to die?

Prophet and priest he stood
In the storm of embattled years;
The broken chain was his harp's refrain,
And the peace that is balm for tears.

The hills and the valleys knew
The poet who kept their tryst.
To our common life and our daily strife,
He brought the blessing of Christ.

And we never thought him old,
Though his locks were white as snow.
O heart of gold, grown suddenly cold,
It was not time to go !

TENNYSON

*“Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me;
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.”*

THERE was no moaning of the bar,
O singer lost from sight,
When out beyond our evening star,
Death drifted thee to light.

Black was the pilot at the helm ;
Dark gloomed the hither shore ;
But never wave could overwhelm,
The land that gleamed before.

Beyond these voices there is peace !
Life fills thy cup this day !
From pain and weariness surcease
They find who pass this way !

Oh ! laurelled at the head and feet,
We cannot call thee dead !
Our hearts repeat thy music sweet,
And we are comforted.

A BALLAD OF MAY

WE were ploughing the far-hill meadow,
 Abner, Reuben, and I,
In the flush of the sweet May morning,
 and the off-horse balked at the rise
Midway in the longest furrow ; and I patted
 and coaxed him on ;
I remember the scent of the brown earth,
 the blue of the bending skies.

Said Abner : " We'll rest for the nooning ;
 Old Don's in an ugly mood.
No wonder he's tired, poor fellow ; the colt
 doesn't do his share.
I know how a horse feels, David, with a
 stubborn drop in his blood,
When his mate is a bit of a shirk, Dave.
 I tell you it isn't fair ! "

I was ready to flare in a moment ; you see,
 I was fond of the colt.
I had trained him myself. He was flighty
 and full of kittenish pranks.

And he didn't know, and *I* didn't know, my
dear little black Ben Bolt,
How grave and steady he'd grow yet,
trained in the cavalry ranks.

For swift through the sweet May morning
came the flying thunder of hoofs,
And "Dave! Dave! Dave!" called my
neighbor, Jonathan Bell.
It was hurry and scurry and hasten, "Arm
for your fields and your roofs!"
And I left the boys and the ploughing,
and galloped away pell-mell.

Do you know the blue Shenandoah, with its
loops and twists of light,
Its foams of torrent, its gleams, its brawls,
its sheen through the fields of wheat?
All through our mountain valley we were
up, as we thought, for the right,
Our hearts and our wills were tempered to
the glow of a fierce white-heat.

The bluecoats were swarming near us. Over
our winding ways
Glittered their dark battalions, and the flag
we used to love

Flaunted its stern defiance through the grim
and passionate days
When men did the desperate fighting, and
women sought God above.

Well, it's all past ! Heaven be thanked, boys.
But there's never a Southern May,
Sweet with the lilac and jasmine, that I do
not live again
Through the anger and storm and madness,
and the rollicking times and gay,
When I was a boy on my black Ben Bolt,
off in that hot campaign.

I am glad the flag of my fathers still waves
o'er my native land.
And that grave ? That my little maid
Ethel covers with flowers to-day.
Don't laugh ! You fellows are heartless.
Yet how should *you* understand ?
That's Ben Bolt's grave in the meadow.
We buried him there one May.

I'm grizzled and tough as a pine knot, and
I limp a little, of course.
But I'd never have won my wife there,
and the children on my knee

Would have called some other man father,
but for the brave black horse,
Who carried me safe through shot and
shell, whatever our fate might be.

Battle and march and ambush, I and my
black Ben Bolt,
We scrambled it through together, and we
both went back to the plough,
But Abner and Rube were dead, boys! I
tell you that Morgan colt
Had stuff in him hard to beat, and I wish
he were living now!

THEN AND NOW

G. A. R.—WASHINGTON, 1892

FROM the wide and wind-swept prairies,
From the rugged sea-blown coast,
From the uplands and the lowlands,
They thronged in a mighty host.
Forth from the towns and cities,
With the speed of the rushing train,
They hurried, the dear old fellows,
To answer the roll again.

They fell into line and column,
Regiment and brigade,
With the gallant colors streaming,
And the fiery music played.
And they marched as in the old time,
Though here was the tap of a crutch,
And there was the droop of an empty sleeve
Tangling the heart in its clutch.

The heaven of mid-September
Beamed over them, blue and bland,
And women smiled their welcomes,
And children waved a hand.

There were mirth and greetings only
In the wake of this latest camp,
Though the death-thinned ranks remembered
The past in that sturdy tramp—

Remembered a long procession,
Staggering, sore bespent,
Back from a hundred battles,
With banners grimed and rent.
Boys with their gaunt pale faces,
The friends of hunger and thirst ;
Men who had looked through the gates of
hell
And dared the devil his worst.

Up from the Mississippi,
From the flame-scarred Georgian track,
From the Wilderness, and from Gettys-
burg,
Those soldiers came toiling back.
Are these the same, one marvels ;
Does the old light gleam and shine,
As they follow the fife and bugle
In the long, unwavering line ?

Aye, verily ! Here are the comrades
With brown heads turned to gray,
And lint-white locks have the gray-beards,
Strong in that elder day.

They left their youth behind them
In the tempest of years agone,
When sweet out of War's rough cradle
Slipped Peace in the breaking dawn.

Hats off! There's a greater army
Unstirred in its silent sleep
By the ponderous tread of the living
And the cannons' thunder deep.
An army that keeps its muster
On stones that as sentries stand,
With the names of tens of thousands,
The flower of all the land.

The winds are forever chanting
A requiem for these ;
Brave autumn flaunts their banners
In the flushing maple-trees ;
And the glad birds, winging southward,
Over them pause and rest,
Dropping a song for love, above
The flower of East and West.

A truce to memory's dreaming!
O flag that we live to serve ;
By all we hold most holy,
Never from thee we'll swerve !

Dear flag that rallies a nation,
A mighty, growing host
From the breezy, rippling prairies
To the rugged sea-blown coast.

THE EVENING LESSON

IN hands that are gnarled with labor,
And swart with the kiss of the sun,
She is holding her worn old Bible
When the day is almost done.
And, gazing through misty glasses,
For her eyes are growing dim,
She thinks of the Lord who has led her,
And the way she has walked with Him.

The hills in the purple distance
Looked over her childish head:
No charm from their brows has faded,
No tint of their glory fled.
And the sweet green-waving meadows
Through the long years reaped and sown,
For all their harvest guerdons
No blight of age have known.

But she can scarce remember,
It went so long ago,
The time of the tripping footstep,
And the heart's exultant glow.

The life has been hard and bitter,
With its tasks and dull routine,
Less of a song than a sermon,
And the rests so few between.

And yet, she has walked with the Master ;
He has come at the even-tide
To comfort her with His presence.
He has lingered oft by her side
In the hour of care and sorrow,
And the burden has not pressed
So heavily at His whisper,
“Lo ! I will give you rest !”

She read just now in the chapter
Where her ribbon marker lies,
Of the flow of the crystal river,
And the never-darkened skies.
In her there is less of longing
For the golden-paven street,
Than for somewhere a little refuge
Low at the Saviour’s feet.

She has even a quiver of shyness
For the angels at the gate,
And the splendid stately choirs
At the great white throne who wait,

And yearns for a tiny corner
To hide herself away,
Till she feels at home in heaven,
In the wonderful, peaceful day.

Dear soul, trust Him who loveth
His own to the very end,
Who, alike for earth and heaven,
Is thine unfailing Friend.
He will lift the latest burden,
And loose thy sandal-shoon,
And give thee youth and freedom
In His own good time, and soon.

Reading the evening lesson
In a simple, childlike way,
She gathers strength for the labor
Of each revolving day.
She never has time in the morning,
When the work must all be done,
But she keeps her tryst with the Master
At the setting of the sun.

BELLS IN THE DESERT

ABOVE, the desert's mocking sky ;
Below, the desert's sand ;
No palm's green fringe to rest the eye,
No fruit to fill the hand.

But on the pilgrim's raptured ear,
In liquid, silvery swells
Oh, faint and far, yet sweet and clear,
The sound of Sabbath bells.

Across the brooding desert-gloom
The matchless music floats,
The fragrance of the clover's bloom
Is in the lingering notes.

Athwart the dark sirocco's drift
The thought of home is borne ;
Once more their wings the robins lift
Above the springing corn.

No count of dreary days he keeps,
The weary leagues along,
When lo ! o'er flesh and spirit sweeps
A tide of hallowed song.

The sweet bells chime ; his sister blends
Her voice amid their waves,
O'er half the world Balerma sends
The call of Him who saves.

A space, the airy music dies,
And silence reigns supreme.
Once more, the sand, the empty skies,
The fading of a dream.

Yet, bravely heartened, on he goes,
As girded on with strength,
Nor fears the rush of sudden foes,
Nor dreads the journey's length.

The thought of home, the vision pure,
Have cheered the toilsome way,
And nerved the pilgrim to endure
The trials of the day.

Ah ! comrades, in this world of pain
What courage, hope, and cheer,
The bells of heaven with sweet refrain
Sound on the listening ear.

We hear them when our lips are dumb,
When life is dull and gray,
God's loving messengers, they come,
God's wondrous words they say.

Perchance the hands of dear ones gone
Touch soft the vibrant strings,
Or, angels of the immortal dawn,
Draw near on soundless wings.

To us alone the song is sent,
The wine for us is poured,
We rise, and forward fare, content—
Our eyes have seen the Lord.

A LESSON

My little laddie with the earnest eyes
Had toiled an hour to build a castle fair;
I watched each bridge and tower and turret
rise,
Then saw him slowly make a winding stair.

Most beautiful the castle was to see!
A wee flag floating from the battlement!
Alas! my hasty touch! Ah! woe is me,
The whole frail fabric into ruins went!

One instant anger lit the childish face,
Quick tears sprang up to quench the dark
eyes light;
And then, with wonderful, imperial grace,
He curbed that fiery spirit in my sight.

“*You didn’t mean to!* Never mind,” he said.
“I’ll build a prettier castle by and by;”
Then, with a swift shake of the sunny head,
“Why, Dearie, *never* mind! You *shouldn’t*
cry!”

Brave little hero, may I be as strong,
As swift and ready in self-mastery,
Whene'er in this world's course mistake or
 wrong
Upsets some castle just as dear to me !

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

WITH summer and sun behind you,
With winter and shade before,
You crowd in your regal splendor
Through the autumn's closing door.
White as the snow that is coming,
Red as the rose that is gone,
Gold as the heart of the lilies,
Pink as the flush of the dawn.
Confident, winsome, stately,
You throng in the wane of the year,
Trooping an army with banners
When the leafless woods are sere.

Sweet is your breath as of spices
From a far sea island blown ;
Chaste your robes as of vestals
Trimming their lamps alone.
Strong are your hearts, and sturdy
The life that in root and stem
Smoulders and glows till it sparkles
In each flowery diadem.

Nothing of bloom and odor
Have your peerless legions lost,
Marching in fervid beauty
To challenge the death-white frost.

So to the eye of sorrow
Ye bring a flicker of light ;
The cheek that was wan with illness
Smiles at your faces bright.
The children laugh in greeting,
And the dear old people say,
“Here are the self-same darlings
We loved in our own young day,”
As, summer and sun behind you,
Winter and shade before,
You crowd in your regal splendor
Through the autumn’s closing door.

IN THE BELFRY

CLIMB up the dusky turret stair
Ere yet the dawn of day,
And set the silent bells to speech,
That near and far away
All waking things may hear the joy
Pulsating in the air,
As Freedom's silver chimes exult
For Freedom everywhere.

Climb up the narrow turret stair,
Oh, ringer, haste to climb!
The bells shall ring for answered prayer
Adown the aisles of Time.
In this dear Western land of ours,
Still let the tale be told,
That Freedom's self we dearer prize
Than misers prize their gold.

Climb up the haunted belfry stair!
A hundred years ago
A boy's blithe ringing struck the peal
That challenged friend and foe;

The flag flung out its vivid folds,
And forth from many a spire
The answering bells in music broke
To greet the land's desire.

Climb up the echoing turret stair,
And ring the bells once more.
From sea to sea, from lip to lip,
Oh, bid the joy run o'er!
Dear land that Godward looks to-day,
Dear land that childward bends,
Thine be the call our hearts obey
Full gladly till life ends.

IN HAMPTON ROADS

APRIL, 1893

BLUE sky above, blue sea below,
A rainbow flutter from fort and fleet,
Flashing of signals to and fro,
And the ocean highway a thronging street.

Banners flung on the April air,
Thunder of cannon in blithe salute,
The drum's deep note and the trumpet's blare,
The mellow music of pipe and flute.

Seafaring men, with faces tanned
By sun and tempest and windy weather,
A chain of commerce that land with land
Links the states of the world together.

And back of it all, to-day, one sees
The swart, stern brow of the Genoese ;
And under it all, to day, one hears
The diapason of time's long years.

FLOWERS FOR MEMORIAL DAY

COME hither, little darling, and help me gather
bloom—
Great roses, soaked with sunshine, and the
lilac's purple plume ;
For the banners will be waving, the stormy
drums will beat,
And the tread of marching regiments will
shake the listening street ;
And you will clap your hands, dear, the
world will be so gay,
The shops and schools all closed in town,
this bright Memorial Day.

You ask what 'tis about, dear, and why we
pick the flowers,
And break the long, green branches, dew-
gemmed in fragrant showers ;
Why we always take the same path, and
seek the solemn place
Where rows and rows of narrow graves are
marshalled in one space,



As if a regiment of dead were sleeping there
together,

As many a time in life they slept, unheeding
wind or weather.

Hear this, my bonny darling ; you're old
enough to know

That once these sleeping soldiers grimly faced
a living foe.

My father was among them, and I, a child
like you,

Gave him a good-bye kiss, dear, when he
wore our country's blue.

He caught me in his arms, dear, and his
bearded cheek was wet ;

That parting kiss and clasp, my child, I
never could forget.

He loved these dear spring flowers, the lilacs
best of all,

And we'll cover up his bed with them—a
royal purple pall.

Halt ! Why, the men are coming ; they are
just beyond the door.

Run out, my little one, and strew the flowers
their feet before,

And wave your dimpled hand, dear, to the
banner of the stars.

There is no flag so splendid, worth the heart-
aches and the scars,

Worth all it cost to save it, worth all our
love and pride—
The banner brave men live for, and for
which brave men died.

And oft as spring returns, dear, and decks
the smiling land,
Till the blossoms break and ripple, like the
foam upon the strand,
Whatever else we do, dear, whatever leave
undone,
We'll keep in sacred memory the men whose
fields are won.
We'll ask our God to make us as pure
and brave as they
On whose green graves we scatter bloom this
fair Memorial Day.

CROSSING THE DOWN-TOWN FERRIES

CROSSING the down-town ferries,
I challenge a braver sight
Than the throngs of working-people
Homeward faring at night.
Never a drum before them,
Never a banner above,
But they march to soundless music
Under the flag of love.

There are men with grimy faces
And coats that are out of date,
Women whose pallid lips and cheeks
Tell the dreary struggle with fate.
But oh! the cheery courage
And the eyes with light aglow
As over the down-town ferries
These toilers come and go!

They are working for wife and babies,
For a mother bent and gray,
Or a sister bound to a weary couch,
With only the strength to pray.

Working for honest wages
To pay for the bread they eat,
Or to buy the children's school-books,
And shoes for the children's feet.

Crossing the down-town ferries
Daily at set of sun,
You may meet the crowds of toilers
Whose long day's work is done.
You know what a shout of greeting
They'll hear when they lift the latch—
A shout the angels listen for,
And pause in their songs to catch.

Who does not thrill with pleasure
As the brave procession comes,
Needing no rally of bugles,
Nor beat of strenuous drums?
Though a host may press anear them
Who neither toil nor spin,
Nor theirs to wear the laurels
The lowlier laborers win.



II
LOOKING UPWARD

TWO OR THREE

THERE were only two or three of us,
Who came to the place of prayer,
Came in the teeth of a driving storm,
But for that we did not care,
Since, after our hymns of praise had risen,
And our earnest prayers were said,
The Master Himself was present there,
And gave us the living bread.

We knew His look in our leader's face,
So rapt, and glad, and free ;
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,
We heard His "Come to Me!"
Nobody saw Him lift the latch,
And none unbarred the door ;
But "Peace" was His token to every heart,
And how could we ask for more ?

Each of us felt the load of sin
From the weary shoulder fall ;
Each of us dropped the load of care,
And the grief that was like a pall ;

And over our spirits a blessed calm
Swept in from the jasper sea,
And strength was ours for toil and strife
In the days that were thence to be.

It was only a handful gathered in
To the little place of prayer ;
Outside were struggle and pain and sin,
But the Lord Himself was there ;
He came to redeem the pledge He gave—
Wherever His loved ones be,
To stand Himself in the midst of them,
Though they count but two or three.

And forth we fared in the bitter rain,
And our hearts had grown so warm
It seemed like the pelting of summer flowers,
And not like the crash of a storm.
“ ’Twas a time of the dearest privilege
Of the Lord’s right hand,” we said,
As we thought how Jesus Himself had come
To feed us with living bread.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

FOR our dear ones safe on the other side,
 We give Thee praise, O Lord!
Though our hearts are sore for prayers denied,
 And our songs have a broken chord.
Never the stain of shame or sin,
 Never the blight of pain,
Shall come to the blest who have entered in,
 Where only love doth reign.

Entered in to the hall of the feast,
 Through the gates of jasper clear ;
Where the dear Lord's hand shall lead the
 least,
 And Himself shall to all be near.
Entered in, where the deathless life
 Into every soul is poured.
Entered, where never toil or strife
 Is seen in the light of the Lord.

Some, whom we lost in the long ago,
 Are waiting to greet us there ;

Forgotten the burden of mortal woe,
Untasted the earth's despair.
Oh! well when we kneel at the Master's feet,
May we thank His tender love,
That saved the bitter and gave the sweet,
In the cup they quaff above.

But thanks and praise for the dear ones gone
To dwell in the peace of God,
No longer weary, or spent, or lone,
No longer under the rod ;
Learning and growing day by day
Where they count not life by days,
Treading forever the upward way—
For these let us offer praise.

Swiftly and surely the hour will come,
When, dropping the load of care,
We, too, shall wing to the better home,
And be found of the loved ones there.
For the family life, and the family love,
Are safe in the Father's thought ;
And one and all, to His house above,
Shall His ransomed at last be brought.

HOW LONG ?

SOME days when the sun is brightest,
And the wind is soft and sweet,
When the ripples feather the lightest
Over the ripened wheat ;
When the world is fullest of music,
And life is thrilled with song,
The cry of my soul is lifted,
“How long, O Lord ! how long ?”

For against the rich, blithe summer
The pain of the world is set ;
I hear the moans of the shipwrecked,
And the groans of vain regret,
The wail of the heavy-hearted,
The grief of the one gone wrong,
And the cry of my soul is lifted,
“How long, O Lord ! how long ?”

Then, stilling my thoughts that struggle,
And bidding the tumult cease,
As sweet as an angel’s whisper,
Comes a blessed word of peace,

And the Lord Himself says, gently :
“ Hush not thy thankful song,
I am yet the Father in heaven,
And I list to thy plaint, ‘ How long ? ’ .

“ In the day of the years eternal,
Beginning and end I see,
The world is glad and sorrowful both,
And the world is safe with Me.
The trouble and loss shall vanish ;
Believe, and await the song,
Untouched by the minor of discord,
Where the ransomed legions throng.”

GOD'S APPOINTMENTS

THIS thing on which thy heart was set, this
thing that cannot be,
This weary, disappointing day, that dawns,
my friend, for thee ;—
Be comforted ; God knoweth best, the God
whose name is Love,
Whose tender care is evermore our passing
lives above.
He sends thee disappointment ? Well, then,
take it from His hand.
Shall God's appointment seem less good than
what thyself had planned ?

'Twas in thy mind to go abroad. He bids
thee stay at home ?
Oh ! happy home ; thrice happy if to it thy
guest He come.
'Twas in thy mind thy friend to see. The
Lord says, " Nay, not yet."
Be confident ; the meeting-time thy Lord will
not forget.

"Twas in thy mind to work for Him. His
will is, "Child, sit still;"
And surely 'tis thy blessedness to mind the
Master's will.
Accept thy disappointment, friend, thy gift
from God's own hand.
Shall God's appointment seem less good than
what thyself had planned ?

So, day by day and step by step, sustain thy
failing strength,
From strength to strength, indeed, go on
through all the journey's length.
God bids thee tarry now and then, forbear
the weak complaint ;
God's leisure brings the weary rest, and cor-
dial gives the faint.
God bids thee labor, and the place is thick
with thorn and brier ;
But He will share the hardest task, until He
calls thee higher.
So take each disappointment, friend ; 'tis at
thy Lord's command !
Shall God's appointment seem less good than
what thyself had planned ?

A KING'S MESSENGER

“THE King will send a messenger ; set thou
thy house in state,
And listening for His high behests, do thou
in patience wait.”
So ran the letter that she read, between the
dawn and dark,
And her heart went forth in answer swift,
the day of days to mark.

Soon the house was swept and garnished, and
she filled each space with flowers,
And, singing, to and fro she passed, and chid
the laggard hours ;
Then her board was spread for feasting, and
her flagons brimmed with wine,
For naught could be too rich or rare to
please the guest Divine.

“The King will send a messenger, a mes-
senger who stands
Full often where he takes the gifts of love
from royal hands.

The King hath gift and grace for thee, have
thou thy heart prepared ;
The precious treasure meant for *thee*, no other
soul hath shared.”

So came the second missive, between the stars
that burn,
The steadfast warders of the night, each in
its ordered turn ;
And she set her heart in order, she searched
her soul to see
If any evil thing by chance in lurking haunt
might be.

She knelt in lowly vigil, and her pleading
prayer went forth,
But came apace no messenger from South-
land or from North.
She questioned Life, she questioned Death, she
asked all mystery,
But none could tell her of the gift that erst
her own would be.

And while she waited, ill at ease, the song
died on her lips,
The flowers faded, and the light of noonday
knew eclipse ;

A shadow crept athwart the floor, the door
 swung open wide,
And the messenger the King had sent was
 standing at her side.

Alas ! That messenger had brought a gleam-
 ing sword of woe,
That reft the golden links of love, and laid
 the dearest low.
She shivered, mute and desolate, crushed under
 blinding pain ;
Could this be Heaven's messenger, to cleave
 her life in twain ?

Then the day grew as the midnight, and the
 midnight as the day ;
Nor sun nor stars shone over her, upon the
 weary way.
Men marked the furrowing of her brow, the
 blanching of her hair,
And the shadow deep and deeper grew, till
 night lay everywhere.

Then slowly came a marvel, a miracle to
 see,
For out of gloom a wondrous light was
 born her own to be.

There was knowledge of all suffering, that
through the torpor stole,
Until she learned the secret of the balm that
maketh whole.

Then the shadow changed to glory, and be-
hold! an angel form,
With a radiance like the splendor of the
sunlight after storm!
And ere she knew it Heaven had come within
her home's small space,
To make, oh! strange, sweet wonder, there a
hallowed dwelling-place.

And now the flowers are blooming, and again
she sings by day,
And she feels the angels near her when at
eve she kneels to pray.
She shall find the dear lost darlings, she will
know them as they stand,
Serene and full of gladness, in the blessed
better land.

The King *did* send a messenger, and Sorrow
was his name,
And in his mighty hand he bore a sword of
smiting flame.

But the sword was wreathed with lilies, and
they will not fade away,
For they were sown in gardens where the
flowers bloom for aye.

THE CITY OF GOD

FOUR square it lies, with walls of gleaming
pearl

And gates that are not shut at all by day:
There evermore their wings the storm winds
furl,

And night falls not upon the shining way
Up which by twos and threes, and in great
throng,

The happy people tread, whose mortal road
Led straight to that fair home of endless
songs,

The city, beautiful and vast, of God.

Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, the
joy,

The light, the bloom of that sweet dwell-
ing-place,

Where praise is aye the rapturous employ
Of those who there behold God's loving
face.

Here, fretted by so many a tedious care,
And bowed by burdens on the weary road,
We cannot dream of all the glory there,
In that bright city, beautiful, of God.

There some have waited for our coming long,
Blown thither on the mystic tide of death,
They catch some fragments of our broken
song,
The while the eternal years are as a breath.
There we shall go one gladsome day of days,
And drop forever every cumbering load,
And we shall view, undimmed by earth's
low haze,
The city, beautiful and vast, of God.

In that great city we shall see the King,
And tell Him how He took us by the hand
And let us, in our weakness, drag and cling,
As children when they do not understand,
Yet with the mother walk as night comes
on,
And wish that home were on some smooth-
er road.
Oh, with what pleasure shall we look upon
Our Saviour in the city of our God!

A SONG OF SUMMER

THE ships glide in at the harbor's mouth,
And the ships sail out to sea,
And the wind that sweeps from the sunny
South,
It is sweet as sweet can be.
There's a world of toil and a world of pains,
There's a world of trouble and care,
But oh, in a world where our Father reigns,
There is gladness everywhere !

The harvest waves in the breezy morn,
And the men go forth to reap ;
The fulness comes to the tasselled corn,
Whether we wake or sleep.
And far on the hills by feet untrod,
There are blossoms that scent the air,
For oh, in this world of our Father, God,
There is beauty everywhere !

The breath grows faint on the dying lips,
And the weary hands lie still.
Our life is dimmed by the grief-eclipse,
But we rest on the Father's will.

A world of parting, a world of tears,
Yet we sink not in despair,
For oh, in the midst of the mournful years,
There is comfort everywhere !

The babe lies soft on the mother's breast,
And the tide of joy flows in.
He giveth, He taketh, He knoweth best,
The Lord to whose home we win.
And oh, when the soul is with trials tossed,
There is help in the lifted prayer !
For never a soul that He loves is lost,
And our Father is everywhere.

The ships sail over the harbor bar
Away and away to sea.
The ships sail in with the evening star
To the port where no tempests be.
The harvests wave on the summer hills,
And the bands go forth to reap,
And all is right, as our Father wills,
Whether we wake or sleep.

A DAY OF THE LORD

IT was not a day of feasting,
Nor a day of the brimming cup ;
There were bitter drops in the fountain
Of life as it bubbled up,
And over the toilsome hours
Were sorrow and weakness poured,
Yet I said "Amen," when night came ;
It had been a day of the Lord.

A day of His sweetest whispers,
In the hush of the tempest's whirl ;
A day when the Master's blessing
Was pure in my hand as a pearl.
A day when, under orders,
I was fettered, yet was free ;
A day of strife and triumph,
A day of the Lord to me.

And my head as it touched the pillow,
When the darkness gathered deep,
Was soothed at the thought of taking
The gift of childlike sleep ;

For what were burdens carried,
And what was the foeman's sword,
To one who had fought and conquered
In a blessed day of the Lord?

THE INVISIBLE GUEST

The whole family in heaven and on earth.—*Eph. iii. 15.*

THE children gather the table round,
And this is rosy and that is fair ;
No dearer group in the land is found,
With their laughing eyes and their golden
hair.

In its innocent freedom the household mirth
Ripples along in a sparkling tide,
And the ruddy cheer of the firelit hearth
Streams o'er the snow on the highway side.

But the mother turns from the curtained
pane,
And, counting her children one by one,
Sees the child who will never come back again,
Just as if she had never gone.
And between her sisters the grave, sweet face,
A lingering smile in the lovely eyes,
Is lighting the mother's shadowed place
With the wonderful glory of Paradise.
So

Only a tender fancy, wrought
Of tissues a mother's longing weaves?
Only a picture of memory brought
From under the last year's withered leaves?
I like to think that the Father's love,
Keeping us all in its hallowed care,
Sent that sweet waft from the home above
To comfort the mother mourning there.

She mused but now of the little mound,
A gray-green scar on the furrowed turf,
The white drifts heaping its loneliness round,
Tumbled and broken like frozen surf,
And the old pain woke; yet her gentle
thought
Was not to silence the children's glee,
When into her spirit's depth was brought
A word triumphant: "Lord, with Thee,
"Dear Lord, with Thee is my treasure kept,
Safe from the storm which sweeps the wild,
At home with Thee, for in Thee she slept,
And my Saviour's arms enfold my child."
How many who think of the dear ones gone,
Thus lift the heart to the better land—
Thus wait through the night till the new
day's dawn,
In the Presence where they and we shall
stand.

Their names are starred on the household roll ;
They mingle not in the household life ;
Yet—living soul unto living soul—
They whisper peace to our weary strife.
Not theirs to struggle for daily bread,
To join the search for the fleeting gold ;
But not a pulse of their love is dead,
Nor ever a thought they send us cold.

Into our gay and festal days,
As into days that are dull and gray,
They drop the sweets of the endless praise,
Which thrills in the place where their
angels stay.
And what though sometimes the tear-drops
start,
As the haunting footsteps go and come !
Their memory hallows the trusting heart,
And bids its murmur of loss be dumb.

THEY NEITHER TOIL NOR SPIN

THEY neither toil nor spin ; they wear
Their loveliness without a care ;

As pure as when the Master's feet
Were set amid their perfume sweet.

The summer hills rejoice to see
Their carven censers swinging free.

They wait within the gates of dawn
Till all the watching stars are gone,

Then open cups of honey-dew,
To greet the morn's returning hue.

Oh fair, wise virgins, clothed in white ;
Oh lilies, fresh from looms of light,

I dearly love you, for the word
That stars you, noted of the Lord.

I love you when, in gold and red,
The sunset colors o'er you spread ;

Or when, like fairy sails of snow,
The river rocks you to and fro.

You are the Master's flowers to me ;
His smile upon your grace I see.

My transient discontents I hush,
If but my garment's hem ye brush.

And everywhere your fragrance brings
This message from the King of Kings :

“ We neither toil nor spin. And ye,
Who spin so long and wearily,

“ Who toil amid earth's grime and dust,
Behold—a hallowed arc of trust.

“ Oh, pause and hear the Father say
His angels are your guides to-day !

“ While worlds in matchless order move,
Ye shall not slip from sovereign love ;

“ For He who bids the planets sweep,
Cares for the tiniest babe asleep.”

THE CORE OF THE HOUSE

THE core of the house, the dearest place, the
one that we all love best,
Holding it close in our heart of hearts, for
its comfort and its rest,
Is never the place where strangers come, nor
yet where friends are met,
Is never the stately drawing-room, where our
treasured things are set.
Oh, dearer far, as the time recedes in a dream
of colors dim,
Breathing across our stormy moods like the
echo of a hymn,
Forever our own, and only ours, and pure as
a rose in bloom,
Is the centre and soul of the old home nest,
the mother's darling room.

We flew to its arms when we rushed from
school, with a thousand things to tell;
Our mother was always waiting there, had
the day gone ill or well.

No other pillow was quite so cool, under an
aching head,
As soft to our fevered childish cheek, as the
pillow on mother's bed.
Sitting so safely at her feet, when the dewy
dusk drew nigh,
We watched for the angels to light the lamps
in the solemn evening sky.
Tiny hands folded, there we knelt, to lisp the
nightly prayer,
Learning to cast on the Loving One early
our load of care.
Whatever the world has brought us since,
yet, pure as a rose in bloom,
Is the thought we keep of the core of the
home, the mother's darling room.

We think of it oft in the glare and heat of
our lifetime's later day,
Around our steps when the wild spray beats,
and the mirk is gathering gray.
As once to the altar's foot they ran whom
the menacing foe pursued,
We turn to the still and sacred place where
a foe may never intrude,
And there, in the hush of remembered hours,
our failing souls grow strong,
And gird themselves anew for the fray, the
battle of right and wrong,

Behind us ever the hallowed thought, as pure
as a rose in bloom,
Of the happiest place in all the earth, the
mother's darling room.

We've not forgotten the fragrant sheaves of
the lilacs at the door,
Nor the ladder of sunbeams lying prone on
the shining morning floor.

We've not forgotten the robin's tap at the
ever friendly pane,
Nor the lilt of the little brook outside, troll-
ing its gay refrain.

How it haunts us yet, in the tender hour of
the sunset's fading blush,
The vesper-song, so silvery clear, of the hid-
den hermit-thrush !

All sweetest of sound and scent is blent,
when, pure as a rose in bloom,
We think of the spot loved best in life, the
mother's darling room.

Holding us close to our best in life, keeping
us back from sin,
Folding us yet to her faithful breast, oft as
a prize we win,
The mother who left us here alone to battle
with care and strife
Is the guardian angel who leads us on to
the fruit of the tree of life.

Her smile from the heights we hope to gain
is an ever-beckoning lure ;
We catch her look when our pulses faint,
nerving us to endure.
Others may dwell where once she dwelt, and
the home be ours no more,
But the thought of her is a sacred spell,
never its magic o'er.
We're truer and stronger and braver yet,
that, pure as a rose in bloom,
Back of all struggle, a heart of peace, is the
mother's darling room.

THE CHILD AT THE GATE

'TWAS a little faint tap at the golden gate
And St. Peter came with the key,
For never in heaven is soon or late
Whoever may knocking be.

And all in a rift of the morning star
A small child waited there,
On tiptoe touching the jewelled bar
With the dew-drops caught in her hair.

A mither-bairn who had never known
Aught save the tenderest care ;
She had fared to the heavenly land alone,
As the souls of all must fare.

The good Saint opened wide the door,
"Come in, there is naught to fear,
You have done with trouble forever more
Oh ! little one, safe and here.

"Now enter in where the children play,
And the dear Lord smiles to see

Their guileless mirth as He did in the day
When He walked in Galilee."

A soft wind stirred in the lily beds,
The children paused in their play,
And bent the ranks of their flaxen heads,
As children in church who pray.

Then One drew near with the brooding eyes
That are homes of love unpriced ;
And the little soul looked up, trustful, wise,
Into the Face of Christ.

Across the meadows she went with Him,
And He held her fast by the hand ;
And He gave her drink from the cups that
brim
With the sweet of the deathless hand.

Oh ! if the mother who waked and wept,
By a cradle's empty space,
Had dreamed how Love had her treasure kept
In the dear Lord's dwelling-place,

She would never have mourned so bitterly,
Nor found it so hard to wait,
Till the good St. Peter should turn the key
For her, in the golden gate.

OUR BROKEN DAYS

SHALL we have days unbroken,
 Nay, more, an endless day,
Where ne'er a harsh word spoken
 Shall cloud our onward way,
Where never hope shall perish,
 Nor ever grief shall moan,
Where all our fond hearts cherish
 Shall aye abide our own ?

Oh ! peace for which in yearning
 Our wearied spirits wait,
Oh ! love whose fullest learning
 No dear desire shall sate,
Nor eye nor ear hath measured
 The glory and the praise,
Which God for us hath treasured
 Beyond these broken days.

Chill days when pulses languish,
 And mists of life hang low,
Dark days whose load of anguish
 Rolls on with sluggish flow,

And busy days whose weaving
Stretches from sun to sun,
And days of dull believing,
Whose tedious course is run.

The days of haste and worry
When interruptions throng,
The days of waste and flurry
That leave no heart for song,
The days of earthly leaven,
And dimming worldly dross,
The empty days bereaven,
In shadow of the cross.

Yes, these shall all be over,
And garments bright with praise
Their memory shall cover
Beyond our broken days.
Such petty trifles pain us,
Here in this fevered life,
Such dragging fetters chain us,
Our hands with care so rife,

We scarce discern how holy
And sweet the time might be
If spent in converse lowly,
O gracious King, with Thee.
We lose the tender gladness
It might be ours to win,

And trail our robes in sadness,
And stain their folds with sin.

Bless God, there's no temptation
To snare the hearts at home,
To heaven's pure isolation
No strife or ill shall come.
The Lord who loved and bought us
Lays up a feast of praise,
Until He safe have brought us
Beyond our broken days.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

A THOUSAND leagues of land and sea
Divide, to-day, my friend and me.

I cannot clasp her tender hand,
Or in her gracious presence stand ;

No word of mine may reach her ear,
And yet I hold her close and dear.

In loyal thought my love is sent,
O'er mountain chain and continent ;

In vain extends the widest sea
To separate my friend and me,

Since heart to heart, o'er time and space,
Her truth is still my dwelling-place.

• • • •
Where gates of chrysoprase and pearl
Their gleaming leaves of light unfurl,

Where evermore the glory falls
On golden floor and jewelled walls,

Where Christ Himself the ransomed praise
Through long, unclouded, sinless days—

There, safe beyond these changeful tides,
Dear as my life, a friend abides.

Not mine to touch His garment's hem,
Not mine, as yet, the floods to stem,

And on the hills forever fair
Breathe gladly love's divinest air.

But death and distance cannot part
My friend and me ; for heart to heart,

The one in heaven, the one on earth,
We share the new and royal birth.

Gone on a little while before,
My friend hath pain and pang no more.

And I, who wait till even-song
Shall waft my latest prayer along,

And carry up my praiseful breath
By some angelic wing of death,

Know well, full well, that, heart to heart,
We, parted here, but seem to part.

For since the Lord of life is King,
His pilgrims homeward pledged to bring,

Not powers beneath, nor hosts above,
Can break the triple bands of love.

There menaces, on land or sea,
No peril to my friend and me.

There is no fear, let come what will,
But I shall keep my friend, who still,

Invisible to mortal sense,
Abides, in God's good Providence,

The hour when we again shall meet.
Nay, often, at the Mercy Seat,

A hand, once pierced, unites us both ;
Beyond the reach of rust and moth

Our precious things for us are stored,
When one is present with the Lord,

And one anear the hither sea
Is—with the Lord—content to be.

MY ALABASTER BOX

IT was not at meat in the Pharisee's house
That I sought the Lord to-day,
Nor yet in my closet, hushed and fair,
When I lowly knelt to pray,
But I carried my box of ointment sweet
In the face of the throngs that I chanced to
meet.

“It is jewelled and precious,” I proudly cried,
“And it cost me gems and gold,
And see, I shall pour it freely out
That my neighbors may behold,
And then I will meekly go my way.
‘She has broken her box,’ will the gazers
say.

So up and down through the busy street,
Seeking my Lord, I went,
My head held high and my soul on fire
With the glow of its good intent,
And presently hard where two roads met
Stood One whom my soul cannot forget.

Down in the dust at His beautiful feet,
With my trailing draperies white,
I cast myself with the odors sweet—
Were there angels to watch the sight?—
“Lo! I for Thy pleasing have brought my best;
Take it, sweet Saviour, and give me rest!”

He stayed me then with a kingly word;
“Not so, my child!” said He.
“Hast thou never a thought of the hidden
name

In the hands that were pierced for Thee?
Wouldst thou wound the heart that broke
to save
Thy life from the power that holds the slave?

“Bring hither thy pride and thy discontent
And thy cherished and vain self-will;
Empty thy soul of its low desires
That My love that soul may fill.
It is not thy jewelled box I crave;
I am seeking the soul that I died to save.

“And never a gift of precious worth
Canst thou bestow upon me
While thou shuttest thy poorest brother out
From thy quickened sympathy,
And never in crowds and sordid show
Can I my best upon thee bestow.”

The vision faded ; the throng whirled by ;
I stood in the path alone.

Then I went to seek for the lost, the weak,
Since my blessed Lord was gone.
Wherever they need me the box I break,
To-day, to-day, for my Lord's dear sake.

ONLY IN THEE

FAIN would I be strong with the heart of
the brave,

All fearless in conflict, all calm in defeat!
Fain would I be patient, Lord, patience I
crave,

In pain to be silent, submissive and sweet.
Oh, where shall I find it, the strength I would
win,

As pilgrim I journey through peril and sin?
My Master, my Saviour, my help is in Thee,
In Thee is my help, Lord, 'tis only in Thee.

Fain would I be gentle, whatever betide,
And meek, unresisting, returning no word
In haste or in anger to those at my side
Who may grieve or annoy me. Thy gen-
tleness, Lord,
Bestow on thy child, that her looks may be
fair,
And mildness distil from her speech, and
her care

Be laid at Thy feet ; for whatever it be
In Thee is my help, Lord, and only in Thee.

Fain would I be faithful, so daily to prove
To those whom I meet that my life has a
spring

Abundant in beauty and precious in love,
And that close to the Vine in my earth-
life I cling.

Fain would I be faithful, nor follow afar,
Fain would I abide where Thy chosen ones
are ;

My Master, my Saviour, be gracious to me,
In Thee is my help, Lord, and only in Thee.

Fain would I be cheerful, and sing as I go,
Uplifting Thy praises through darkness and
dawn ;

Fain wear a white robe, not the garment of
woe,

And joyously, blithely, and gayly go on.
Oh, bid me to triumph and smile through my
tears,

Oh, crown me a victor o'er trials and fears.
My Master, my Master, my joy is in Thee,
In Thee is my help, Lord, and only in Thee.

GOING HOME

OUT of the chill and the shadow
 Into the thrill and the shine ;
Out of the dearth and the famine
 Into the fulness divine.

Up from the strife and the battle
 (Oft with the shameful defeat),
Up to the palm and the laurel,
 Oh, but the rest will be sweet !

Leaving the cloud and the tempest,
 Reaching the balm and the cheer,
Finding the end of our sorrow,
 Finding the end of our fear.
Seeing the face of the Master
 Yearned for in "distance and dream,"
Oh, for that rapture of gladness !
 Oh, for that vision supreme !

Meeting the dear ones departed,
 Knowing them, clasping their hands,

All the beloved and true-hearted,
 There in the fairest of lands !
Sin evermore left behind us,
 Pain nevermore to distress ;
Changing the moan for the music,
 Living the Saviour to bless.

Why should we fear at the dying
 That is but springing to life,
Why should we shrink from the struggle,
 Pale at the swift closing strife,
Since it is only beyond us,
 Scarcely a step, and a breath,
All that dear home of the living,
 Guarded by what we call death !

There we shall learn the sweet meanings
 Hidden to-day from our eyes.
There we shall waken like children
 Joyous at gift and surprise.
Come, then, dear Lord, in the gloaming,
 Or when the dawning is gray !
Take us to dwell in Thy presence—
 Only Thyself lead the way.

Out of the chill and the shadow
 Into the thrill and the shine ;
Out of the dearth and the famine
 Into the fulness divine.

Out of the sigli and the silence
 Into the deep-swelling song ;
Out of the exile and bondage
 Into the home-gathered throng.

III
THANKSGIVING

IN THE OLD HOME

LIKE the patient moss to the rifted hill,
The wee brown house is clinging,
A last year's nest that is lone and still,
Though it erst was filled with singing.
Then fleet were the children's pattering feet,
And their trilling childish laughter,
And merry voices, were sweet, oh, sweet,
Ringing from floor to rafter.

The beautiful darlings one by one,
From the nest's safe shelter flying,
Went forth in sheen of the morning sun,
Their fluttering pinions trying.
But oft as the reaping-time is o'er,
And the hoar frost crisps the stubble,
They haste to the little home once more
From the great world's toil and trouble.

And the mother herself is at the pane,
With a hand the dim eyes shading,
And the flush of girlhood tints again
The cheek that is thin and fading.

For the boys and girls are coming home,
Their mother's kiss their guerdon,
As they came ere yet they had learned to
 roam
Or bowed to the task and burden.

Over the door's worn sill they troop,
The skies of youth above them,
The blessing of God on the happy group,
 Who have mother left to love them.
They well may smile in the face of care,
To whom such grace is given ;
A mother's faith and a mother's prayer
 Holding them close to Heaven.

For her, as she clasps her bearded son,
 With a heart that's brimming over,
She's tenderly blending two in one,
 Her boy and her boyish lover.
And half of her soul is reft away—
 So twine the dead and the living,
In the little home wherein to-day
 Her children keep Thanksgiving.

There are tiny hands that pull her gown,
 And small heads bright and golden ;
The childish laugh and the childish frown,
 And the dimpled fingers folden,

That bring again to the mother breast,
The spell of the sunny weather,
When she hushed her brood in the crowded
nest
And all were glad together.

A truce to the jarring notes of life,
The cries of pain and passion.
Over this lull in the eager strife,
Love hovers, Eden fashion.
In the wee brown house were lessons taught
Of strong and sturdy living,
And ever where honest hands have wrought,
God hears the true Thanksgiving.

THANKSGIVING ALWAYS

WHEN barn and byre are safe,
When flocks are in the fold,
When far and near the burdened fields
Have bowed 'neath harvest's gold,
When clusters rich have drooped
From many a blushing vine,
And genial orchards, wide and fair,
Have owned the touch divine,
Then, up from grateful hearts
Let joyful praise arise
To Him who gives the waiting earth
The blessing of the skies.

When round the mother's knee
The little children cling,
When night and morn the household eaves
With merry voices ring,
When not a sunny head
Is missing from the throng,
When not a silver note is dropped
From out the daily song,

Then, up from thankful hearts
Let fervent praise arise
To Him who fills the happy home
With blessing from the skies.

When round the white-haired man,
Serene in stately age,
The children's children troop to crown
His lengthened pilgrimage,
When through translucent air
The gentle matron sees
How love and peace have followed her
While striving God to please,
Then, up from reverent hearts
Let psalms of praise arise
To Him who keeps His promises
In blessing from the skies.

When blight is on the field,
When storms are o'er the hills,
When leap, in wildest fury tossed,
The late rejoicing rills,
When wealth is on the wane,
And battle finds defeat,
When bitterness o'erbrims the cup
That erst was foaming sweet,
Ah! then? Yea, then, let thanks
From all believers rise

To Him whose chariot is the clouds,
Who reigns above the skies.

When rosebud lips are pale,
And household mirth is hushed,
When o'er a tiny coffin lid
The bliss of life is crushed,
When breaks the staff of strength
And snaps the beauteous rod,
Or worse—when dear ones go astray
And leave their father's God,
"Even so, Thy will be done,"
The Christian's heart shall say,
And find that will a central sun
To light the darkest day.

Come pleasure's tide at flood,
Come loss and grief and pain,
Come death and parting—God is good,
So lift we up the strain
Of thanks to Him who keeps
His own in storm and calm,
And who with dearth, or wound, or cross,
Aye sends a healing balm.
All days should therefore be
Thanksgivings to the Wise,
The True, the Kind, the Sovereign hand,
That rules us from the skies.

MOTHER'S THANKSGIVING

SUCH a quaint little Mother, in a gown of
silver gray,
Her snowy hair smooth-parted, in the dear
old-fashioned way,
And on her head a lint-white cap, of softest,
filmiest lace,
That made a picture-frame about her sweet
and placid face.

Such a brave little Mother ! So many a
year had fled
Since her husband, leal and loving, had been
numbered with the dead.
So many, many summers had she borne a
lonely heart
That her fair age and his bright youth were
half a life apart.

Such a gentle little Mother ! Ah ! the boys
remember now,
Sorrowfully, every shadow on that tender,
tranquil brow.

They remember how she taught them, how
she kissed them each at night,
And they felt no need of angels keeping
watch till morning light.

Such a trustful little Mother! There were
dark days now and then,
Though the dear lads never dreamed it until
they were bearded men;
She would go away alone, kneeling in her
chamber dim,
And would tell the Lord her troubles, cast-
ing all her care on Him.

Such a happy little Mother! With a laugh
like bells a-chime,
Ever swift to see the bright side, ready with
a quip and rhyme.
Oh, so quick with love's own pity! oh, so
earnest 'neath the jest!
Ever lavishing her kindness, giving ever of
her best.

Such a winsome little Mother! Why, the
village children came
Trooping merrily about her; she knew every
one by name;



Baby faces smiled to greet hers, by some
subtle impulse stirred,
As if fledglings knew the brooding of the
tender mother-bird.

Such a true little Mother! Never dallying
with wrong ;
Honest to the very soul's core ; bearing bur-
dens late and long ;
Paying every debt with interest ; filling every
day with work,
With a deep disdain for any who the day's
demand would shirk.

Such a blessed little Mother! Through their
tears her sons to-day
Thank the God she served and honored that
she sleeping passed away ;
Lifted to the home in heaven, to the com-
rade gone before,
Just as earth's Thanksgiving greetings floated
through the open door

COMMON MERCIES

DEAR Lord, are we ever so thankful,
As thankful as we should be to Thee,
For Thine angels sent down to defend us
From dangers our eyes never see ;
From perils that lurk unsuspected,
The powers of earth and of air,
The while we are heaven-protected
And guarded from evil and snare ?

Are we grateful, as grateful we should be,
For commonplace days of delight,
When safe we fare forth to our labor,
And safe we fare homeward at night ;
For the weeks in which nothing has hap-
pened
Save commonplace toiling and play,
When we've worked at the tasks of the
household,
And peace hushed the house day by day?

Dear Lord, that the terror at midnight,
The weird of the wind and the flame,
Hath passed by our dwelling, we praise Thee,
And lift up our hearts in Thy name ;
That the circle of darlings unbroken
Yet gathers in bliss round the board,
That commonplace love is our portion,
We give Thee our praises, dear Lord !

Forgive us who live by Thy bounty,
That often our lives are so bare
Of the garlands of praise that should render
All votive and fragrant each prayer.
Dear Lord, in the sharpness of trouble
We cry from the depths to the throne !
In the long days of gladness and beauty,
Take Thou the glad hearts as Thine own.

Oh, common are sunshine and flowers,
And common are raindrop and dew,
And the gay little footsteps of children,
And common the love that holds true.
So, Lord, for our commonplace mercies,
That straight from Thy hand are bestowed,
We are fain to uplift our thanksgivings—
Take, Lord, the long debt we have owed.

IV
CHRISTMAS SONGS

HER GIFTS

A DEAR little mother is waiting apart—
The mother of children three.

“My Lord,” she cries, in the hush of her heart,
“Wilt Thou take a gift from me?
I have heard the angels sing Thy birth,
I have followed Thy shining star,
And here at the shrine of all the earth,
Lo! I and my children are.

“And all in the glow of the Christmas morn,
My gold to lay at Thy feet,
I am leading my darlings with care unworn,
With brows that are pure and sweet.
Oh, never had gems from the mines such worth
As the treasure to-day I bring
To the beautiful shrine of all the earth,
To the glorious Infant King.

“My children three, with their waving hair
And the fearless look in their eyes,
They lisp thy name in the vesper prayer,
And at matins when they rise.

Nothing they know of the dole and dearth
Of souls that with sin have striven ;
They kneel at the shrine of all the earth—
‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven.’”

They stand in the shadow of pine and fir ;
They listen, and, floating through,
They catch the answer that’s sent to her
Through a rift in the upper blue :
“ Since the Christ-child came to the weary
earth
No gifts are to Him so sweet
As the children’s hearts, with their joy and
mirth,
Lovingly brought to His feet.

EMBERS

STILL the embers glow,
Though the fire is faint and low,
Though the frost is on the pane,
And the year is on the wane,
Still the embers glow.

In the pine wood deep,
Where the shadows lie asleep,
Where the storm complains at night,
And the winter drifts are white,
In the pine wood deep,

Stands the Christmas-tree,
Waiting for the children's glee ;
Waiting for the mother's hand,
And the joyous household band,
Stands the Christmas-tree.

In the shops so bright,
Stuffs with rainbow hues of light,
Costly, carven, rich, and rare,
Curious gifts beyond compare,

Bloom untouched by blight,
Catch the eye and lure the heart,
Weaving spells with mystic art,
In the shops so bright.

Life is glad and gay,
Set to dancing-time of holiday,
Home and hearth o'erflow with cheer,
Love enfolds its near and dear,
Life is glad and gay.

Yes, the embers glow !
Though the fire is faint and low,
Though the frost is on the pane,
And the year is on the wane,
Yet the embers glow.

WREATHED WITH HOLLY

WREATHED with holly, leaf and stem
Twined to form her diadem,
Berries which the red sun kissed
In her dark hair's floating mist ;
Prickly points entangled there
As if stars were caught in snare ;
Princess of the revels she,
Love to her would bend the knee.

Love would fain aspire to flush
That fair cheek with sudden blush,
But the snow is not so cold
As the bud ere it enfold,
And the girl's heart lieth pure,
Heeding not the siren's lure.
Holly berries crown her now,
Virginal in soul and brow.

Wreathed with holly? Ah! we fear
There is shadowy presage here.

Never she of woman born
But must wear the crown of thorn,
Never she whose horoscope
Bore not dread amid its hope.
Who save Egypt's olden Sphynx
Can interpret what she thinks,
Maid with downcast eyes who broods,
In a world of solitudes,
Silent as the forest shrine
Where great Pan is throned divine?

THE ANNUNCIATION

WITH grave eyes rapt in dreams of prayer,
She sits alone within the room,
Unheeding if around her there
 Be golden ray or deepening gloom.
Her heart uplifted, silent, sweet,
Her thought goes forth her Lord to greet.

And thus attent before the King,
 No sense of strangeness startles her
When one from Heaven draws near to bring
 A sign to Heaven's worshipper.
“Hail, Mary!” fills her soul with bliss,
Her tranquil years have waited this.

Behold a lily in his hand,
 A lily by the angels sown,
With fragrance from the deathless land ;
 This lily, in God's garden grown,
Salutes her purity, as white
As robes the saints wear in God's sight.

Oh, sacred grace of motherhood!
Divinest thing beneath the sky,
Which yet the heavens overbrood,
The watching angels hovering nigh.
Unending rite of sacrifice,
Costly beyond earth's utmost price.

“Hail, Mary!” thrills each mother soul;
Ere yet the life beat faint and sweet,
That shall not cease while ages roll,
Each mother hears the glad repeat,
And thenceforth, hallowed, dwells apart,
Heaven’s matchless lily in her heart.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

WHAT became of the Star, the Bethlehem
Star,
That was followed by kings and sages
As they journeyed o'er desert and mountain
far,
To find the Pearl of the Ages?

Did the angels quench its torch of fire
In the first sweet Christmas dawn,
When they sang to the world of the world's
desire,
Ere the night from the hills had gone?

Did it suddenly vanish into space,
Blown out, when its golden ray
Had bathed in glory the lonely place
Where the Child and mother lay?

And since I wonder, but cannot tell,
Some day to come I shall know;

It may guide the steps of the wise who dwell
Where the heavenly mansions glow,

When they shut their eyes on the lamps of
earth,

And with silent feet unshod,
Go forth to look for the Father's hearth
In the beautiful City of God.

It well may be the Bethlehem Star
Shines out across their way,
Leading them safe, or near, or far,
To the Prince of the deathless day.

Oh ! Star that over the manger stood
The night when Christ was born,
When the Only Potent, the Only Good,
Came down to this world forlorn.

Still shine in the heart of mother and child
Wherever love reigns and sings,
And the face of a little one undefiled
Hath that which may conquer kings.

Oh ! Bethlehem Star, through pain and loss,
Still over the cradle shine,
And comfort us if a shadowy cross
There glimmer in faint outline.

For we cannot but take the self-same path
That was trodden by kings and sages,
When they dared the base world's utmost
 wrath,
And sought the Pearl of the Ages.

WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES

WHEN Christmas comes,
The baby girl who scarce can speak,
The youth with bronzed and bearded cheek,
The aged bent with weight of years,
The sorrow-stricken spent with tears,
The poor, the rich, the grave, the gay,
Who fare along life's rugged way,
Are glad of heart when, in the sky,
The wondrous seraph wings sweep by,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
The sailor on the seas afloat,
The traveller in lands remote,
The warrior by the camp-fire's light,
The courtier in the palace bright,
The student by the midnight lamp,
The miner deep in dust and damp,
Alike uplift, through riven skies,
The wondering look of glad surprise,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
In field and street, in mart and farm,
The world takes on a lovelier charm ;
Sweet-scented boughs of pine and fir
Are brought, like frankincense and myrrh,
To make our hallowed places meet
For hands that clasp and tones that greet,
While hearts, worth more than gold or gem,
Go forth to find their Bethlehem,

When Christmas comes.

CHRISTMAS EVE

WELL, John, we will hang up our stockings—
There are only you and I
To keep alive the Yule-log,
As the lonely years go by.
Once we had quite a dozen
To hang in a cheerful row,
Where the good Saint Nicholas packed his
gifts
Snugly from knee to toe.

There were four for our fathers and mothers,
Both of us had them then,
And we drove in a nail for Cousin Ruth,
And another for Uncle Ben.
And the dear little children followed,
And then came yours and mine ;
I can see that row of stockings,
Through my gathering tears they shine.

Oh ! sweet in the dusk of twilight,
Were our Christmas Eves, dear John !

And merry and gay were our Christmas morns
In the years that I think upon.
For old and young together
Were merry and blithe and gay,
In the whirl of the blessed old-time
When we kept our Christmas day.

We two have grown grave and silent,
Though we have not grown apart.
You are more to me than the whole wide
world,
I more to you, sweetheart !
But the children are men and women,
With their own full lives to live ;
And they've only a moment now and then,
To the old home nest to give.

And a furrowed ridge, in the grave-yard,
Covers the bit of earth.
Where they sleep, through snow and sun-
shine,
The dear ones who gave us birth.
The world is narrowing in, John,
It will be our turn to go
Some Christmas Eve, in the gloaming,
When the lights are dim and low.

But we'll not be sorrowful, darling—
You mind the dear old tune,

That we sang with tripping tongues, love,
When our sun was at its noon.
For I think we'll hear the angels,
As the gates of pearl swing wide,
And we step ashore in the morning
On the river's farther side.

So, John, we will yet keep Christmas,
And bid the Yule-log glow,
And crowd our stockings with presents,
Lovingly, heel and toe.
Perhaps the dear Saint, passing,
Will smile a little to see
How much like merry children
A happy old pair can be.

GOD BLESS US ALL

GOD bless us all ! With Tiny Tim
'Tis thus we finish prayer and hymn,
While cheerily from lip to lip
The Christmas wishes gayly trip ;
God bless us all, the circle round,
Wherever are our dear ones found ;
At home, abroad, please God, we say,
God bless His own on Christmas Day !

God bless the golden heads arow
Where ruddy hearth flames leap and glow ;
God bless the baby hands that clasp
Heart fibres in their clinging grasp ;
God bless the youth with eager gaze ;
God bless the sage of lengthened days ;
At home, abroad, please God, we cry,
God guard His own, 'neath any sky !

God ease the weary ones who bear
A cumbering weight of grief and care ;

God give the wage no ill can spoil,
The honest loaf for honest toil ;
We sound the heartfelt prayer and hymn,
And breathe "Amen," with Tiny Tim,
As reverently, please God, we say,
God bless us all on Christmas Day !

V
EASTER

AN EASTER SONG

SING a song of Easter,
A song of happy hours,
Of dashing spray, and shadow play,
And lovely springing flowers,
Of birds come home again to build
Beside the cottage eaves,
Of waking buds, and rushing floods,
And dance of rustling leaves.

Sing a song of Easter,
A song that means a prayer
Of want and love to One above
Who keeps His world in care ;
A song for all on this green earth,
For dear ones passed away,
Sing clear and strong the joyful song,
The song of Easter Day.

Sing a song of Easter,
A song of pure delight,

A song that starts in merry hearts,
And swells from morn till night ;
An Easter song that children lift,
Without a jarring chord,
That thrills afar from star to star,
To praise the children's Lord.

MARY

SHE walked amid the lilies
Upstanding straight and tall,
Their silver tapers bright against
The dusky mountain wall ;
Gray olives dropped upon her
Their crystal globes of dew,
The while the doors of heaven grew wide
To let the Easter through.

All heaven was rose and golden,
The clouds were reft apart,
Earth's holiest dawn in dazzling white
Came forth from heaven's own heart ;
And never, since on Eden
Creation's glory lay,
Had ever garden of the Lord
Beheld so fair a day.

Her eyes were blurred with weeping,
Her trailing steps were slow ;

The cross she bore within her
Transfixed her soul with woe.
One only goal before her
Loomed through her spirit's gloom,
As in the early morning
She sought the guarded tomb.

But down the lilyed pathway
A kingly presence came,
A seamless garment clothed Him,
His face was clear as flame,
And in His hands were nail-prints,
And on His brow were scars,
But in His eyes a light of love
Beyond the light of stars.

For tears she could not see Him,
As o'er the path He came,
Till, like remembered music,
He called her by her name ;
Then swift her soul to answer,
The Lord of life she knew,
Her breast unbarred its prison gates
To let the Easter through.

Such light of revelation
As bathed her being then,
It comes anew wherever Christ
Is known indeed of men ;

Such glory on the pathway,
It falls again on all
Who hear the King in blessing,
And hasten at His call.

Rise, King of grace and glory,
This hallowed Easter-tide,
Nor from Thy ransomed people
Let even death divide ;
For yet again doth heaven
Throw all its gates apart,
And send the sacred Easter
Straight from its glowing heart.

K

THE END







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